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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : Embassy MOSCOW

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

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March 14, 1961

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SUBJECT:

FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS: Embassy Efforts to Obtain Soviet Publications
from Moscow Libraries

During December, January and February the Embassy's two publications procurement officers explored possibilities for obtaining Soviet publications from several of Moscow's major public libraries. Readers' cards were applied for at four libraries and obtained at three of them; the card catalogues were explored; and test applications were made at two of the libraries for microfilm copies of a limited number of periodicals of interest to the US Government.

A judgement as to the usefulness of these efforts must await the results of the microfilm applications, promised for April by the libraries (Soviet libraries normally require a month to six weeks, and in practice often longer periods to fill microfilm orders). The Embassy's tentative conclusions are that Moscow's libraries are potentially quite valuable sources, but that under present conditions, the controls on their use largely negate their value as a source of raw intelligence on a large scale. While there is only limited evidence on the way in which this situation might change in the future, that which is available, plus the reporting officer's "feel" for the matter, indicate that Soviet libraries generally, and those visited in particular, are gradually moving toward a more liberal attitude on access, and that in time, and given a further overall improvement in Soviet-US relations, Soviet libraries might become of use to the Embassy as a direct large-scale source of microfilmed publications. Until this happens, the libraries will probably be most useful as a source of information on narrowly defined high priority requirements for publications in those categories which the Soviets do not consider sensitive.

The Embassy's publications procurement officers now have readers' cards at three Moscow libraries: the Lenin Library, the All-Union Library of Foreign Literature, and the State Public Scientific-Technical Library. An application at the Fundamental Library of Social Sciences of the Academy of Sciences made on December 23, 1960 was apparently accepted when the Embassy was suddenly informed that the application would have to be made through the Foreign Ministry. This was done on December 27, 1960 but no reply has been received to date.

Readers' cards at the Lenin Library are issued to Embassy officers within twenty minutes after application. A brief printed form must be filled out, giving name, place and date of birth, identity card number, academic degree, place of employment, and branch of knowledge in which the applicant wishes to work. Cards are good for one year, and entitle the bearer to use of the library's public

PASmith, Jr./dmg
REPORTER

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facilities. Each reader is assigned to one of the various main reading rooms in the library.

Both of the P.O.'s are assigned to Scientific Reading No. 1 which is reserved for Soviet academicians, university professors and other senior scholars.

The Lenin Library's facilities correspond, on the whole, to those described in the latest (1959) edition of its official guide book which gives a brief history of the library, describes its holdings, purpose, and services, lists the main reading rooms and describes the card catalogues and how to use them. (Putevoditel' po Gosudarstvennoi Bibliotke SSSR Imeni V. I. Lenina, Izdanie Biblioteki Imeni V. I. Lenina, Moskva, 1959. Copies of this guide were sent to interested agencies in 1959 under the Embassy's publications procurement program.)

Controls on use of the library by Embassy officers are ostensibly non-discriminatory or surreptitious. The major and most obvious form of control is the "group processing" device, under which official-documentary (e.g., ministerial directives), program-methodical (e.g., teaching plans and programs, answers to tests, etc.), instructive (e.g., instructions for servicing new machinery and equipment), reference-information, and calendar type publications, amounting to 1,700,000 units, are listed in the readers catalogues only by generalized groups. Access to them requires the reader to refer to the librarian on duty who determines his needs and supposedly locates the necessary publication for him.

A less obvious method of control appears when request slips are submitted for catalogued publications and the slips are consistently returned with "in bindery" or "charged out" markings. The scope of this form of limitation and the workings of the control mechanisms, which is possibly related to a control list to be applied by stock attendants to request slips bearing certain readers' card numbers, are not clear. Examples of the kinds of publications in this area are Avtoreferati of dissertations, and Sovnekhov bulletins.

The third, and most effective measure of control involves a "tail" who follows the Embassy officer around the library, unobtrusively ascertains the nature of his interests, and warns librarians on duty of his presence. This measure of control, in the reporting officer's experience, was not particularly close; so long as he stayed in the main readers catalogue, and after a number of regular visits to the library, they tended to become lax. It tightened up noticeably however when he attempted to use a small, recently re-arranged reading room for specialized technical literature. Conversation with officers from other Embassies who have used the Lenin Library from time to time indicate that this method of close personal control is not universally applied to all diplomats nor does it appear to be applied consistently to people who use the library regularly over long periods of time.

Measures to increase the degree of access in Soviet libraries have been increasingly evident during the past two years in articles appearing in Soviet library publications urging librarians to change all or parts of their libraries to the "free access" system. An example of this may be seen in the Lenin Library's Reading Room for Special Types of Technical Literature mentioned above. This reading room contains firm catalogues and an apparently complete set of the state

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technical standards (BCSTC). Its novelty consists in the fact that readers are allowed to consult the small catalogue, and then, either order the book on a call slip, or with the permission of one of the several librarians on duty, to go behind the librarian's desk and look for the book and necessary related material in the open stacks.

The facilities and control measures applied in the State-Public Scientific-Technical Library are roughly comparable, although on a much smaller scale, to those described above for the Lenin Library. However, it apparently does not have any cards marked "group processing" and has a larger number of open stacks than at Lenin Library.

Both Lenin and the Scientific-Technical Library offer microfilm services. On February 21, 1961 a request was made at Lenin Library for microfilms of the 1960 editions of four Sovetskoye bulletins, and on March 8, 1961 at the Scientific-Technical Library for editions of five periodicals. Both requests identified the requesting Embassy officer by name and position and was stamped with the Embassy seal. A list of the titles requested is enclosed.

The All-Union Foreign Literature Library differs from the other libraries chiefly in the fact that its catalogue and reading rooms are in a separate building from its stacks, thus requiring a full day's delay between the submission of a request and the receipt of the requested publication. There is no indication of "group processing" in its main readers catalogue. No attempt has been made, as yet, to explore what microfilm services it offers, if any.

The Embassy PRO's will continue to test the controls at the main Moscow libraries from time to time, and will submit additional requests for microfilms if the current requests are met.

For the Ambassador:

Leslie S. Brady
Leslie S. Brady
Counselor for Cultural Affairs

Enclosure:
List of periodicals.

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Periodicals Requested on Microfilm from:

A. Lenin Library - February 28, 1961

1. Promyshlennost Armenii Sovnarkhoz Armyanokoi SSR. Erevan. All issues for 1960.
2. Promyshlennno-ekonomicheskii Bulletin'. Ivanovskii Sovnarkhoz. Ivanovo. All issues for 1960.
3. Bulletin' Tekhniko-ekonomicheskoi informatsii. Kuznetskii Sovnarkhoz Izhevsk. All issues for 1960.
4. Tekhniko-ekonomicheskii Bulletin' Irkutskii Sovnarkhoz. Irkutsk. All issues for 1960.

B. State Public Scientific-Technical Library - March 8, 1961

1. Annotatsii i referaty statei iz inostrannykh polygraficheskikh zhurnalov. All issues for 1960.
2. Informatsionno-tekhnicheskii listok, Riga. All issues for 1960.
3. Informatsionno-biologicheskii spisok. Nauchno-tekhnicheskoe gornoe obshchestvo. Moskva. All issues for 1960.
4. Severo-kavkazskoe pravlenie, informatsionnyi sbornik, No. 1 (1959).
5. Yakutskoe upravlenie gidrometeorologicheskoi sluzhbi, Informatsionnoe pis'mo No. 13 (1960), No. 3 (1960).

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